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SUBJECT: ARAB PERFORMANCE AT THE 63RD UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Classified By: POLMILCOUNS JEFFREY DELAURENTIS.
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

1. (C) ARAB PERFORMANCE AT THE 63RD UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS A MIXED BAG, WITH DIFFERENTIATED VOTING ON SOME KEY ISSUES. EGYPT MAINTAINED ITS USUAL ACTIVISM IN SHAPING AND DEFENDING UNHELPFUL G-77, OIC, AND NON-ALIGNED POSITIONS. SYRIA ENGAGED IN ITS USUAL RHETORIC AND POLARIZING TACTICS, AND ALGERIA DISPLAYED SOME NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR AS WELL, SEEKING (UNSUCCESSFULLY) TO BLOCK MOROCCO FROM SPEAKING AT A UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMEMORATIVE EVENT AND PLAYING AN UNHELPFUL ROLE ON A RESOLUTION ON MORE TRANSPARENT MANAGEMENT OF OIL REVENUES. BUT MOST ARAB DELEGATIONS, ANXIOUS TO AVOID THE RISKS OF MORE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND LACKING THE STAFF TO DO SO, GENERALLY OPTED FOR A LOW PROFILE AND SOUGHT REFUGE AND RELATIVE ANONYMITY IN REGIONAL CONSENSUS POSITIONS.

2. (C) BRIGHT SPOTS IN ARAB PERFORMANCE AT THIS YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY INCLUDED: SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ARAB ABSTENTIONS/ABSENCES DURING THE THIRD COMMITTEE VOTE ON THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION; THE DEFEAT OF THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION IN COMMITTEE BY A MUCH LARGER MARGIN THIS YEAR, THANKS IN PART TO THE CRITICAL SHIFT OF FOUR ARAB VOTES FROM "YES" TO ABSENT; IRAQ'S POSITIVE PERFORMANCE IN CHAIRING THE SIXTH COMMITTEE (LEGAL AFFAIRS); THE HELPFUL ROLE OF MOROCCO, LEBANON, AND IRAQ IN SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS ON BURMA/MYANMAR AND NORTH KOREA; AND THE SAUDI-INITIATED INTERFAITH DIALOGUE EVENT, WHICH PRODUCED A HELPFUL STATEMENT ENDORSING FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND REJECTING THE USE OF RELIGION TO JUSTIFY TERRORIST ACTIVITY. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, ARAB PERFORMANCE AT THIS YEAR'S UNGA WAS MARKED BY: PREDICTABLE SUPPORT FOR UNBALANCED AND UNHELPFUL RESOLUTIONS ON PALESTINE, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, AND DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS, AMONG OTHERS; CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO THE IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION (13 OUT OF 17 DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING IRAN); A TOTAL ABSENCE OF SUPPORT FOR KOSOVO ON THE QUESTION OF SEEKING AN ICJ ADVISORY OPINION ON ITS UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; AND A NOTABLE INCREASE IN ARAB ABSTENTIONS ON THIS YEAR'S COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION CALLING ON STATES TO RESPECT THEIR ARMS CONTROL AND NON-PROLIFERATION COMMITMENTS.

HELPFUL ARAB SHIFTS ON IRAN NO ACTION MOTION

3. (C) IN THIS YEAR'S THIRD COMMITTEE VOTE, 12 ARAB STATES (INCLUDING NON-ARAB IRAN) SUPPORTED THE MOTION AND FIVE ARAB STATES EITHER ABSTAINED (JORDAN) OR WERE ABSENT (BAHRAIN, LIBYA, MOROCCO, AND YEMEN.) A SIMILAR MOTION LAST YEAR WAS DEFEATED BY ONLY ONE VOTE, WITH JUST TWO ARAB STATES (JORDAN AND IRAQ) ABSENTING THEMSELVES. THIS YEAR'S ABSENCES REPRESENTED A CRITICAL SHIFT OF FOUR "YES" VOTES AND ACCOUNTED FOR A MAJOR PART OF THE TEN-POINT MARGIN OF VICTORY

(71-81(US)-28) IN DEFEATING THE MOTION. JORDAN'S SHIFT FROM ABSENT TO ABSTAIN REFLECTED A DECISION TO ABSTAIN ON ALL COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS, A FORMULA JORDAN FELT WOULD MAKE ITS POSITIONS MORE CONSISTENT, MORE INSULATED FROM OUTSIDE PRESSURE, YET RESPONSIVE TO OUR PRIORITY OF DEFEATING THE NO ACTION MOTION. YEMEN'S ABSENCE, ACCORDING TO YEMENI PERM REP ALSAIDI, WAS IN REACTION TO IRAN'S UNHELPFUL MEDDLING WITH REBEL TRIBES IN YEMEN'S NORTH.

14. (C) LIBYA'S ABSENCE, PERHAPS THE MOST INTERESTING SHIFT IN THE ARAB GROUP, REFLECTED LIBYA'S FITFUL EVOLUTION TOWARD MORE RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS, LIBYAN PERM REP ETTALHI'S READINESS TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, AND HIS DIRECT TIES TO QADDHAFI. IN INFORMING NEA AREA ADVISER OF LIBYA'S INTENTION TO BE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE, ETTALHI REGRETTED THAT "THINGS MOVE SLOWLY IN LIBYA" AND THAT AN ABSENCE WAS THE BEST LIBYA COULD DO AT THIS TIME. MOROCCO'S SHIFT TO AN ABSENCE ON BOTH IRAN VOTES, COUPLED WITH ITS SUPPORT ON BURMA AND NORTH KOREA, MADE MOROCCO OUR MOST HELPFUL ARAB PARTNER ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. ON THE DOWNSIDE IRAQ THIS YEAR MOVED FROM AN ABSENCE TO A "YES" ON THE NO ACTION MOTION, EXPLAINING THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURING APPROVAL FOR THE SOFA, IT COULD NOT RISK FURTHER IRRITATING IRAN.

ARAB VOTES SO FAR HOLDING FIRM
FOR DECEMBER 18 PLENARY VOTE

5.(C) THE PLENARY VOTES ON THIRD COMMITTEE ISSUES, INCLUDING THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION, ARE NOW EXPECTED FOR DECEMBER 18. WITH THIS VOTE IN MIND, IRAN HAS MOUNTED AN ACTIVE LOBBYING EFFORT TO BUILD SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY FROM COUNTRIES THAT HAD

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PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED THE NO ACTION MOTION BUT THIS YEAR DID NOT. FOR NOW AT LEAST, THE FIVE ARAB STATES THAT WERE ABSENT OR ABSTAINED IN THE COMMITTEE VOTE SEEM TO BE HOLDING FIRM. WITH VARYING DEGREES OF CERTITUDE, THE BAHRAINI, MOROCCAN, LIBYAN, YEMENI, AND JORDANIAN PERM REPS HAVE ALL TOLD NEA AREA ADVISER THEY EXPECT THEIR COUNTRY TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION IN THE DECEMBER 18 PLENARY VOTE. AS ALWAYS, THE PROOF WILL BE IN THE PUDDING, AND WE WILL THUS MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ARAB DELEGATIONS NEXT WEEK IN ORDER TO HELP PREVENT ANY SLIPPAGE.

CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION ON IRAN

16. (C) THIS YEAR'S SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAN PASSED IN THE COMMITTEE VOTE (70(US)-51-60). ARAB GROUP VOTING BROKE DOWN (0-13-2), WITH TWO ABSENT. THOSE ABSTAINING WERE JORDAN AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES; THOSE ABSENT WERE IRAQ AND MOROCCO. MOROCCO'S SHIFT FROM "NO" IN 2007 TO ABSENT THIS YEAR WAS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT DEPRIVED IRAN OF A NEEDED "NO" VOTE. SIMILARLY, IRAQ'S ABSENCE, BY DEPRIVING IRAN OF A NEEDED "NO" VOTE, HELPED LIMIT THE DAMAGE FROM IRAQ'S UNHELPFUL SHIFT FROM ABSENT TO SUPPORT ON THE NO ACTION MOTION. THE ABSTENTIONS OF JORDAN AND UAE DID NOT MATERIALLY SHIFT THE BALANCE COMPARED TO LAST YEAR'S VOTE BUT AGAIN HELPFULLY DENIED IRAQ POTENTIAL SUPPORT, THE UAE'S ABSTENTION WAS A CONTINUATION OF ITS 2007 POSTURE AND, ACCORDING TO SOME OTHER GULF PERM REPS, SHOULD BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IRAN-UAE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. JORDAN'S ABSTENTION, BY ACTIVELY SIGNALLING THAT JORDAN WAS NOT WILLING TO SUPPORT IRAN, REPRESENTED A MODEST AND MAINLY SYMBOLIC STRENGTHENING OF ITS POSITION. ALSO NOTABLE -- AND REFLECTING THE FELT NEED OF REGIONAL STATES TO CAREFULLY NAVIGATE CONFLICTING PRESSURES SURROUNDING THIS ISSUE -- IS THAT THREE OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES THAT HELPFULLY ABSTAINED OR WERE ABSENT FOR THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION (BAHRAIN, LIBYA, AND YEMEN) VOTED AGAINST THE SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION.

NO ACTION MOTION/SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION ON BURMA/MYANMAR

17. (C) THE NO ACTION MOTION ON BURMA WAS DEFEATED IN THE

COMMITTEE VOTE THIS YEAR (54-90(US)-34), A SLIGHTLY POORER SHOWING THAN LAST YEAR (54-88-34). ARAB GROUP VOTING BROKE DOWN AS FOLLOWS: 13 YES (INCLUDING IRAN), 3 NO (IRAQ, LEBANON, MOROCCO), AND 1 ABSTENTION (JORDAN). THE ONLY CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR'S VOTE WITHIN THE ARAB GROUP WAS ALGERIA'S UNHELPFUL SHIFT FROM ABSENT TO SUPPORT. REGARDING THE SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURMA, THIS YEAR'S RESOLUTION PASSED (89-29-63) COMPARED TO (88-24-66) IN 2007. ARAB GROUP VOTING WAS EXACTLY THE SAME AS IN 2007 (3-6-7), WITH ONE ABSENCE (TUNISIA). IRAQ, LEBANON, AND MOROCCO SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION; BAHRAIN, ALGERIA, EGYPT, IRAN, LIBYA, OMAN, AND SYRIA VOTED AGAINST; AND JORDAN, KUWAIT, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, AND YEMEN ABSTAINED. THE DIFFERENTIATED VOTING UNDERCUT THE "DOUBLE STANDARD" AND "PRINCIPLED OPPOSITION TO COUNTRY SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS" ARGUMENTS OFTEN USED TO JUSTIFY ARAB VOTING ON IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.

ARABS EVENLY DIVIDED OVER HUMAN
RIGHTS SITUATION IN NORTH KOREA

18. (C) THE SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NORTH KOREA PASSED IN COMMITTEE (95(US)-24-62), WITH THE ARAB GROUP THIS YEAR AGAIN TAKING NOTABLY DIVERGENT POSITIONS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JORDAN'S SHIFT FROM "YES" TO "ABSTAIN", ARAB GROUP VOTING ON THIS YEAR'S RESOLUTION WAS THE SAME AS IN 2007 -- (5-6-5) V. (6-6-4), WITH TUNISIA ABSENT BOTH YEARS. BAHRAIN, IRAQ, LEBANON, MOROCCO, AND SAUDI ARABIA SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION BOTH YEARS. THE SIX "NO" VOTES WERE THE SAME BLOC THAT VOTED FOR THE NO ACTION MOTION ON BURMA (ALGERIA, EGYPT, IRAN, LIBYA, OMAN, SYRIA). THE FIVE ABSTENTIONS WERE FROM JORDAN, YEMEN, QATAR, KUWAIT, AND THE UAE. JORDAN'S DECISION THIS YEAR TO ABSTAIN ACROSS THE BOARD ON THIRD COMMITTEE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS, IN THE INTEREST OF CONSISTENCY, WAS BEHIND JORDAN'S SHIFT. AS WITH THE BURMA HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION, DIFFERENTIATED ARAB VOTING ON THE KOREA RESOLUTION PUT THE LIE TO "DOUBLE-STANDARD/PRINCIPLED OPPOSITION TO COUNTRY-SOPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS" ARGUMENTS.

GCC SHIFT TO ABSTENTION ON FIRST
COMMITTEE COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION

19. (C) ALTHOUGH THE U.S.-PROPOSED COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION (CALLING FOR RESPECT FOR AND STRENGTHENED ENFORCEMENT OF ARMS

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CONTROL AND NON-PROLIFERATION COMMITMENTS) PASSED HANDILY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY VOTE (158(US)-0-18), THERE WAS DISAPPOINTING SLIPPAGE IN ARAB AND PARTICULARLY GULF SUPPORT.

THE BREAKDOWN IN ARAB GROUP VOTING WAS (6-0-10), WITH ONE ABSENCE (OMAN). EGYPT, SYRIA, AND IRAN MAINTAINED THEIR ABSTENTION POSTURE FROM 2005, WHEN A SIMILAR COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION WAS LAST PUT FORWARD. HOWEVER, EIGHT ARAB STATES SHIFTED FROM SUPPORT IN 2005 TO AN ABSTENTION OR ABSENCE FOR THE 2008 VOTE. THOSE ABSTAINING OR ABSENT WERE: BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, LIBYA, OMAN, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, AND YEMEN. THOSE SUPPORTING THE RESOLUTION WERE: ALGERIA, IRAQ, JORDAN, LEBANON, MOROCCO, AND TUNISIA. IRAQ MISTAKENLY ABSTAINED IN THE COMMITTEE VOTE, ACCORDING TO THEIR PERM REP, BUT SUPPORTED THE COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION IN THE PLENARY VOTE.

110. (C) GCC PERMREPS HAVE BEEN NOTABLY UNABLE TO PROVIDE A CLEAR OR CONSISTENT EXPLANATION FOR THEIR WHOLESALE SHIFT TO AN ABSTENTION. THOUGH THERE IS NO SUCH LANGUAGE IN THE TEXT, TWO PERMREPS PURPORTED TO TRACE GCC ABSTENTIONS TO CONCERNS OVER LANGUAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR OBLIGATORY SHARING OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, THE OMANI PERM REP TOLD NEA AREA ADVISER THAT OMAN'S ABSENCE FOR THE VOTE REFLECTED A LACK OF INSTRUCTIONS AND CLAIMED AS RECENTLY AS DECEMBER 12 NOT TO KNOW WHAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S SPECIFIC CONCERNS WERE ON THE RESOLUTION. IF WE PLAN TO SUBMIT SIMILAR RESOLUTIONS IN THE FUTURE, UNDERSTANDING MORE PRECISELY THE NATURE OF GCC CONCERNS THIS TIME AROUND AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS WHERE

POSSIBLE TO ADDRESS THOSE CONCERNS WILL BE KEY TO GAINING THE
BROADEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT. IN THIS SPIRIT, DEPARTMENT MAY
WISH TO CONSIDER ASKING EMBASSIES, IN THE COURSE OF OTHER
BUSINESS, TO PROBE THE REAL COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION CONCERNS IN
CAPITALS.

IRAQI LEADERSHIP OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE (LEGAL AFFAIRS)

¶11. (C) IRAQI PERM REP AL-BAYATI AND HIS LEGAL EXPERTS
PROVIDED SMOOTH, STEADY, EFFICIENT LEADERSHIP OF THE SIXTH
COMMITTEE, SKILLFULLY MANAGING TO ENSURE THAT ALL RESOLUTIONS
HANDLED BY THE COMMITTEE WERE PASSED BY CONSENSUS. AL-BAYATI
PLAYED AN ESPECIALLY HELPFUL ROLE IN BRINGING THE SIDES
TOGETHER AND IN FACILITATING A FACE-SAVING, NEW
ZEALAND-INSPIRED COMPROMISE THAT ENABLED THE RUSSIANS TO STEP
BACK FROM A CONFRONTATION OVER THEIR PROPOSAL TO REVERSE
CURRENT UN POLICY OPPOSING HONORARIA FOR UN RAPPORTEURS. THE
EGYPTIAN LEGAL EXPERT ALSO PLAYED A HELPFUL ROLE IN BRINGING
THE G-77 AROUND ON THE QUESTION OF REFORM OF THE UN'S
INTERNAL JUSTICE/DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM.

EGYPTIAN MANEUVERING ON SECOND AND THIRD COMMITTEE ISSUES

12 (C) THE EGYPTIANS ONCE AGAIN PROVED THEMSELVES HIGHLY
SKILLED, PROFUSE IN THEIR PROFESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP AND
DESIRE FOR COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT FAIRLY
CONSISTENT IN PUSHING POSITIONS, LANGUAGE, AND RESOLUTIONS WE
FIND UNHELPFUL. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY ADEPT AT MARSHALLING
G-77, OIC, AND NAM SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN POSITIONS, EXPLOITING
THE LACK OF CAPACITY/INTEREST OF SMALLER AFRICAN DELEGATIONS,
AND THEN TAKING THE LEAD IN NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF THESE
GROUPS. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY THE CASE ON CONTROVERSIAL
THIRD AND FOURTH COMMITTEE ISSUES. IN PRACTICE, THIS HAS
MEANT: 1) CONSISTENT AND VOCAL OPPOSITION ON ISSUES RELATING
TO HUMAN RIGHTS, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, AND SOCIAL ISSUES; 2)
RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED BASICALLY AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI, WITH
EITHER NO NEGOTIATION OR ONLY MINIMAL NEGOTIATION DESIGNED TO
GET THE EUROPEANS ON BOARD; AND 3) THE ENDURING RITUAL OF
UNBALANCED, REPETITIVE, AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE PALESTINIAN
RESOLUTIONS.

¶13. (C) ON THE COMBATING THE DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS
RESOLUTION, EGYPT ASSUMED WHAT IT SAW AS ITS NATURAL
LEADERSHIP ROLE, ALTHOUGH UGANDA, AS THE CURRENT ISLAMIC
CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE THIS
RESPONSIBILITY. WHILE PROFESSING TO WANT TO BE HELPFUL IN
ADDRESSING OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE RESOLUTION, THE EGYPTIANS IN
THE END MADE ONLY THE MOST MINOR CHANGES AND PUSHED THROUGH,
ONCE AGAIN, A VERY PROBLEMATIC RESOLUTION THAT, BY FOCUSING
ON DEFAMATION AT THE EXPENSE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND
BELIEF, UNDERCUTS FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND GIVES COVER FOR
REPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT ACTION. THE ONLY CONSOLATION FOR US WAS
THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE NUMBER OF "NO" VOTES AND
ABSTENTIONS WAS GREATER THAN THE NUMBER OF "YES" VOTES. SYRIA
ALSO PLAYED AN UNHELPFUL ROLE ON SEVERAL THIRD COMMITTEE
ISSUES, OFTEN SEEKING TO INSERT PHRASING OPPOSING "FOREIGN
OCCUPATION" IN UNRELATED RESOLUTIONS ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
ISSUES.

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LOW-KEY BUT HELPFUL SUPPORT FROM LEBANON, MOROCCO, JORDAN

¶14. (C) EXCEPT FOR THEIR OBLIGATORY SUPPORT FOR
PALESTINIAN-RELATED RESOLUTIONS AND HOT BUTTON ISSUES SUCH AS
THE OIC-SPONSORED COMBATING DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS
RESOLUTION, LEBANON, MOROCCO, AND JORDAN PLAYED LOW-KEY BUT
HELPFUL ROLES BEHIND THE SCENES. WHILE LEBANON VOTED AGAINST
US ON IRAN, GIVEN ITS CONCERNS OVER IRAN'S TROUBLE-MAKING
CAPABILITIES VIA HIZBALLAH, LEBANON VOTED WITH US ON BOTH THE
BURMA AND NORTH KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS VOTES. IT ALSO MAINTAINED
ITS SUPPORT FOR OUR COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION. IN THE SECOND

COMMITTEE, LEBANON UNHELPFULLY PUSHED THROUGH AN UNBALANCED RESOLUTION CONCERNING OIL SPILLS ALONG THE LEBANESE COAST ARISING FROM THE 2006 HOSTILITIES WITH ISRAEL. BUT IT ALSO FACILITATED COMPROMISE LANGUAGE TO ACCOMMODATE U.S. CONCERNS ON THE DESERTIFICATION RESOLUTION, PLAYED A HELPFUL ROLE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, AND SOUGHT TO KEEP THE SYRIANS FROM OVERLY POLITICIZING THE OIL SLICK RESOLUTION. MOROCCO, AS NOTED ABOVE, VOTED WITH US ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS ON BURMA AND NORTH KOREA AND HELPFULLY SHIFTED FROM A "YES" TO ABSENT ON THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION. JORDAN, FOR ITS PART, HAS SIMILARLY PLAYED A RESPONSIBLE AND MODERATING ROLE WHERE IT COULD, HELPFULLY ABSTAINING ON THE IRAN NO ACTION MOTION, SUPPORTING THE COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION, FACILITATING CONSENSUS RESOLUTIONS IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE, MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THE ISRAELI DELEGATION, AND GENERALLY SEEKING TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION AND NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM.

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR KOSOVO ON ICJ REFERRAL ISSUE

115. (C) NO ARAB STATE WAS WILLING TO SIDE WITH KOSOVO, A FELLOW MUSLIM MAJORITY STATE, ON THE RESOLUTION REQUESTING AN ICJ ADVISORY OPINION ON THE LEGALITY OF KOSOVO'S UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THE RESOLUTION PASSED (77-6 (US)-74). THE BREAKDOWN IN ARAB VOTING (INCLUDING IRAN) WAS (4-0-9), WITH FOUR ABSENCES. ARAB DELEGATIONS HAVE VARIOUSLY ASCRIBED THEIR LACK OF SUPPORT TO THE "FORMAL OIC POSITION" ON RECOGNITION (WHICH THE OIC REP HAS TOLD US DOES NOT EXIST), CONCERN FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND CAUTIOUSNESS ABOUT IRRITATING RUSSIA. AMONG THOSE SUPPORTING THE ICJ REFERRAL WERE: ALGERIA, EGYPT, IRAN, AND SYRIA. AMONG THOSE ABSENT WERE: IRAQ, KUWAIT, LIBYA, AND TUNISIA. THOSE ABSTAINING INCLUDED: BAHRAIN, YEMEN, JORDAN, LEBANON, MOROCCO, OMAN, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE UAE. MORE POSITIVELY, THE UAE AND MALAYSIA SUBSEQUENTLY RECOGNIZED KOSOVO, A STEP ARAB PERM REPS SEE AS FACILITATING RECOGNITION BY OTHER ARAB STATES. IN ADDITION, ARAB PERM REPS HAVE PRIVATELY VOICED SYMPATHY FOR KOSOVO, EXPRESSED EMBARRASSMENT OVER THE FAILURE OF MUSLIM STATES TO SUPPORT A FELLOW MUSLIM COMMUNITY, AND SAID THAT RECOGNITION WILL HAPPEN AND IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. FINALLY, THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS THAT SAUDI ARABIA IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING A RECOGNITION MOVE.

Khalilzad